



09/755,317

2143

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In Re Application: Thomas R. Goodwin

Application no.: 09/755, ~~317~~ 317

Examiner: Mauro Jr., Thomas J.

Filed: January 5, 2001

Art Unit: 2143

For: NETWORK METHOD SYSTEM AND APPARATUS FOR RECORDING AND
MAINTAINING RECORDS

RESPONSE TO FIRST OFFICE ACTION

Dear Sir or Madam:

This is written in response to an Office Action dated May 7, 2004.

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Drawings

1. The Examiner objected to Figure 1 on the grounds that textual labels were not provided for various features in Figure 1. A proposed corrected drawing is attached where proposed textual labels are added in red to the drawing. It is believed the proposed correction fully meets the objection of the Examiner. Upon approval by the Examiner, corrected formal drawings will be submitted upon allowance of the application.

2. Figures 1A and 1B were objected to because they failed to have numeric labels correlated to specific items in the specification. No basis for this objection was given referencing the Manual of Patent Examining Procedures, Code of Federal Regulation, or U. S. Code to support this objection. It is believed that the drawings as submitted are clear and understandable to one of ordinary skill in the art and that the objection of the Examiner is not well-founded. However, in order to facilitate

prosecution of the application, proposed corrected Figures 1A and 1B are attached where numeric labels are added in red. These numeric labels correspond to the numeric labels in other drawings for the same functions referenced in Figures 1A and 1B. Adding the numeric labels to Figures 1A and 1B, however, requires additional reference numbers in the specification in the detailed Description of the Drawings for Figures 1 A and 1B. A conditional proposed revised paragraph in accordance to current practice is attached to add reference numbers in the Detailed Description of the Drawings for Figures 1A and 1B to correspond to the reference numbers that are added to the proposed corrected Figures 1A and 1B.

Upon acceptance of proposed Figures 1 A and 1B, Applicant respectfully requests that the paragraph at line 20 of page 15 of the specification that begins: "The remaining figures in the Detailed Description of the Drawings..." and ends on the seventh line of page 17 with the language "...a previously entered record to conceal something within that record." be replaced with the following paragraph that is given in the following two pages. The following replacement paragraph has underlining to show added text. No text was deleted.

Replacement Paragraph, Line 20, Page 15 to Line 7, Page 17, #09/755,371

The remaining figures in the Detailed Description of the Drawings are directed toward a specific embodiment of the network record system (50) invention. For this particular embodiment, the figures shown are for a record keeping system for a plane maintenance log record. On the client system (1) a URL is entered for the server system (20). In using standard Internet technology, the client system (1) sends a request through the network connection (10) to the server system (20) to send the web page represented by the URL entered into the Internet browser on the client system (1). The server system (20) will transmit the information, usually in hypertext mark-up language, to the client system (1) so that the client system (1) will visually display the web page that represents the beginnings of the network record system (50). **Figures 1A and 1B** are flow charts showing

how a record might be entered in a record keeping system for plane maintenance log records. In **Figure 1A**, one uses the client system (1) and the network connection (10) to connect to the network server (20) illustrated by the start box in **Figure 1A**. Once one is connected to the network server (20), one will log (204) in usually by entering a password or some other identifying information which will connect one to the client database (22). The first option to enter a record would be to enter the current hours (350) on the aircraft. However, this is not mandatory and one may bypass entering the hours by clicking “go” (360) as is shown in the flow chart. **Figures 2, 2a1, 2a2, 2a3 and 2b** are specific illustrations of an embodiment of this invention where one logs in to the system and progresses to the point where one is prepared to make an entry (316) into the client database (22). To make an entry (316), one proceeds through client database as shown in **Figures 3, 4 and 5**. Once one posts the log entry (406), as is shown in the flow chart in **Figure 1A**, one is ready to log out (216) of the system with the record archived. An archived record is shown in **Figure 6**. **Figure 1B** shows how to modify a previously made entry. Again, one proceeds through the log in procedure to a page as shown in **Figure 4**, but instead of clicking on make entry button (312), one clicks on the list entry button (310). To change a listed record as is shown in **Figure 6**, one clicks on orig. button (501A). One may then enter reasons for change in the new entry (see **Figure 8**), clicking on the post button (406) and logging out. The two functions illustrated by **Figures 1A and 1B** are the critical functions of the network record system (50) invention. The invention has many other features, including remote access, print and search capabilities, calendar keeping and reminder functions, but making and saving original records permanently is the primary function of the invention. It prevents a user from overwriting a previously entered record. If a modification of a previously entered record is necessary, then both records will be maintained and displayed by the system. This assures the accuracy of the records against inadvertent mistakes or deliberate attempts to modify or change a previously entered record to conceal something within that record.

3. The Examiner requested new corrected drawings because they were not acceptable for reproducible quality. Replacement drawings are submitted. It is hoped that there is sufficient increase in the quality of the drawings so that they will have satisfactory reproduction characteristics. Upon approval of the Examiner, these informal drawings will be redone as formal drawings for use in the application.

Claims Rejections 35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 1-2 and 8-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Good, U. S. Patent #6,308,120 in view of Sandifer, U. S. Patent #6,292,806. The inventor respectfully traverses the conclusion that either the Good or Sandifer patents constitute prior art as to this inventor. Without waiving that traversal, the inventor responds to the rejection of Claims 1-2 and 8-9 as follows:

General Observations

The Good '120 patent is directed toward a system to allow geographically dispersed locations to monitor and track vehicle repair records in a coordinated fashion. It would be useful for a nationwide company using an in-house network to track vehicle repair records. It is noted this patent is assigned to the U-Haul International Company, which would obviously have need of such an information management system to maintain and track its widely dispersed rental vehicles throughout the United States. In the Good system, there is a hierarchial organization with local communication terminals (103) communicating to a regional communication terminal (102) communicating with a central equipment manager (101). The purpose of the Good invention is to allow database files to be exchanged on a nationwide basis between local communication terminals (103), regional communication terminals (102), and the central equipment manager (101) to allow for accurate and timely dissemination of service status information on vehicles tracked within the system. The Sandifer '806 patent is directed toward a computer based apparatus to provide access

to complex technical information, such as aircraft, to enable compliance with regulatory requirements. The Sandifer invention uses a computer based apparatus to facilitate dissemination of technical information and to replace the microfiche storage of information. As the Sandifer patent puts it: "It would be desirable to provide an approach that would enable subscribers to interact with a single interface to all publications required for maintaining and repairing a specific aircraft." Col 1, lines 51-54. Incidentally, the Sandifer patent talks of the possibility of maintaining an electronic log book but does not recognize or teach the desirability of maintaining that log book in a segregated, permanently stored, unalterable database.

Here, the Goodwin invention recognizes and meets a previously unmet need. As explained on page 9 of the application, there is a need not only for records that are readily accessible and easily used, but whose accuracy are guaranteed by a third party so that it will be impossible for a user, however motivated, to alter the records once they have been entered in to the remote database. As was explained on page 14 of the application, lines 3-4, once the records are permanently entered into the client database (22), they are thereafter undeletable by the client. The application goes on to explain that once records are entered into the client database, they are permanently stored in the database back-up as a duplicate client database. A duplicate database (22A) provides a permanent back-up for records which are undeletable by the client and serves as a guarantor of the accuracy and completeness of the records.

Detailed Response

The Examiner reasons that the Good central equipment manager (101) acts as a back-up server by storing all service status information for each region. Applicant concedes that a central equipment manager (101) of the Good reference serves as a redundant storage of all service information for each region. As such, under the Good patent, each region and each communication terminal has access to all information stored in the central equipment manager. The purpose of the

central equipment manager is not to serve as a back-up record storage, but rather to serve as a central clearing house for information to make it available throughout the network. This is important because the Goodwin application requires in Claim 1, paragraph f, that: ...“under the control of said server system, receiving said record with said data and said unique client identifier, and storing said record in a segregated database keyed to said client identifier...” (emphasis added). The Examiner reasons that the regional communication terminal of the Good patent receives the records and stores them in its database, which have identifiers for the records. However, there is nothing in the Good patent that indicates that this is a “segregated” database. In the Goodwin application, “segregated” is used in its usual dictionary meaning of “set apart or separated.” In this application, the records are set apart or separated from all other records that may be in the system by the unique client identifier. This is unlike the Good patent where all records are generally available throughout the system. In fact, it is the core function of the Good patent to make these records generally available. In that sense, the Good patent teaches away from the segregated database of the Goodwin application of uniquely identified client records.

The Goodwin application in Claim 1, paragraph g, requires that: “...under the control of said back-up system, receiving said completed record form permanently stored in said server system, and making a permanent back-up so that a back-up of said segregated database is made.” The Examiner reasons that in the Good patent, the regional communication terminal (102) sends vehicle service and status information to a central equipment manager (101), which is a back-up to the regional communication terminal database. As pointed out above, there is nothing to indicate that these records are segregated from each other and keyed toward a unique client identifier, as is required in the Goodwin application. Indeed, as noted above, the Good patent provides the widest possible dissemination of records rather than segregating the records to be available only through use of the unique client identifier. The Examiner reasons that Good fails to explicitly teach that each record is permanent, unalterable, and undeletable. The Examiner then uses Sandifer to reason that:

“Write protection is provided such that each inspection is permanent, i.e. lasting forever, attached to each record so that it is unalterable (Sandifer - column 35, lines 14-22)”. The Applicant respectfully traverses this conclusion of the Examiner regarding the Sandifer patent. In the Sandifer log book function, which is described beginning at the bottom of column 33 and continuing through line 56 of column 34, Sandifer notes that current Federal Aviation Regulations require an original log book be kept at an aircraft’s base of operation. Sandifer notes that the Federal Regulations require any mechanic who services an aircraft sign the original log book, which creates a problem that if an aircraft ever should need service somewhere other than the base, one regulation or another may be violated. Sandifer thus suggests that electronic log books provide the ability to have multiple original log books. Sandifer explains that for certain records, such as inspection and compliance records, a “...write protect flag is set automatically upon extraction of a record during an electronic log book transfer. Although write protected records could still be altered by the site that created them, the records would be unalterable at other sites, thus, securing the inspection and compliance information.” (Column 34, lines 24-31, Sandifer ‘806). (Emphasis added). Thus, while the Sandifer patent teaches that records may be write protected, they are only write protected and unalterable during a transfer at sites other than the aircraft’s base site or at least the site of record creation. As Sandifer explains, the records could still be altered at the site that created them. Thus, Sandifer recognizes that electronic log book may be desirable, but it does not take the next step recognized by the Goodwin invention. That is to say, in Sandifer, sites other than the plane’s base site cannot alter a record entered into the system that is write protected, but that record may still be altered at the original site that created the record. This is in contrast to the Goodwin invention that once a record is permanently entered into and segregated in the system, it is permanently recorded and unalterable both within the system and within the permanent back-up. The Examiner references lines 14-22 of column 35 of the Sandifer patent where Sandifer discusses again this write protection function. However, what is done in the Sandifer system is records are “write protected whenever they are transferred.” Col 35 Lines 17-18. That is to say the records employ a key

unique to the site where they were created. Thus, making the records “unalterable at all other sites” after transfer. However, as was explained above, even the write protected records are alterable at the site that created them. Thus, Sandifer fails to teach the essential permanent, unalterable backed-up records of the Goodwin invention. The Examiner concluded that: “Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the write protection to provide permanent, unalterable records as taught by Sandifer into the invention of Good to provide security for each record so that critical information is not tampered with or changed.” The Applicant respectfully traverses this combination of Good with Sandifer. First, the purpose of the Good system is to provide the widest possible dissemination of information. There is nothing in Good to suggest any utility of providing a segregated permanent unalterable back-up. The Sandifer invention does offer write protected records but records are only unalterable at sites other than the site that originally created them. The records are still alterable from that original site. Consequently, there is nothing in Sandifer that suggests combining it with Good to provide a permanent unalterable back-up regardless of the site where the records are created and nothing in either patent that suggest the need to provide security for each record so that critical information cannot be tampered with or changed by any user at any site.

Regarding Claim 2, the essential deficiencies of the Good and Sandifer references as outlined regarding Claim 1 are incorporated and realleged by reference herein. Because the Good and Sandifer records do not render Claim 1 obvious, they do not render dependant Claim 2 obvious.

Regarding Claim 8 and Claim 9, the Examiner reasons as was outlined above for Claim 1, again reasoning that Sandifer provides write protection giving an unalterable record. As was explained above, Sandifer does not do that and, as explained above, the Good reference does not provide a permanent segregated back-up. The Applicant will not repeat the arguments that show the

combination of Good and Sandifer do not render Claim 1 obvious, but will incorporate and reallege them by reference for Claim 8 and Claim 9.

Regarding Claim 14, the third independent Claim in this application, the Examiner combines Good and Sandifer references as was described for Claim 1 above with Evans, U. S. Patent #6,347,329. Again, the Applicant will incorporate by reference herein the arguments made in response to Claim 1 that the Good reference does not disclose a segregated database nor does it disclose a permanent back-up in said segregated database, and the Sandifer reference does not disclose an unalterable entry into the database and, hence, combining the Good and Sandifer references does not render obvious Claim 14. Rather than repeating the detailed description of the deficiencies in the Good and Sandifer references, the Applicant incorporates the arguments made in response to Claim 1. Adding Evans to Good and Sandifer does not render the essential deficiencies of the Good and Sandifer references. Consequently, it is believed that Claim 14 is allowable as written. Regarding Claim 15, the Examiner repeats the arguments made for the combination of Good, Sandifer, Evans as made in Claim 14. Applicant incorporates by reference the arguments in response to the combination of the Good and Sandifer references for Claim 1. As was argued above, it is believed that the Good and Sandifer references do not disclose a segregated permanent database unalterable by a user and consequently they do not render obvious Claim 14 or Claim 15.

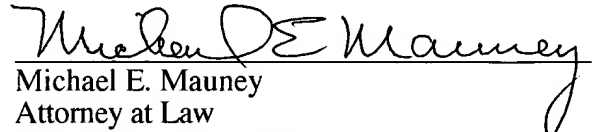
Claims 3-7 depend on Claims 1-2. Claims 10-13 depend on Claims 8-9. Claims 15-20 depend on Claim 14. The Examiner adds Chapin, U. S. Patent #5,931,878 to hold obvious Claims 3 and 10. However, adding Chapin to Good and Sandifer does not remedy the essential deficiencies of Good and Sandifer as references as was argued in response to Claim 1. Consequently, adding Chapin does nothing to render these essential deficiencies of the Good and Sandifer references. Consequently, Claims 3 and 10 should be allowed as written.

Claims 4-7 and Claims 11-13 were held obvious by the Examiner adding Evans, U. S. Patent #6,347,329 to Chapin, Good, and Sandifer. Adding Evans does not render the essential deficiencies of the references of Good and Sandifer as was argued in response to Claim 1. Those arguments are incorporated by reference herein. Consequently, adding Evans to the other combination of references does nothing to remedy the essential deficiencies of Good and Sandifer as 103 references. Consequently, Claims 4-7 and 11-13 should be allowed as written. Regarding Claim 16, the Examiner added Jaing, U. S. Patent #6,278,913. Regarding Claims 17-20, the Examiner added Chapin to the Good, Sandifer, Evans, and Jaing references. Adding these references does nothing to render the essential deficiencies of the Good and Sandifer references as was argued in response to Claim 1. Consequently, Claims 16-20 should be allowed as written.

Conclusion

The Applicant has responded to all rejections pointing out that the Good and Sandifer references fail to teach the essential fundamentals of the Applicant's invention of a segregated database with an unalterable segregated back-up. Consequently, it is believed that the application is in a condition for allowance and the same is respectfully requested.

This the 3 day of Sept., 2004.


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